



Climate Action Network International

Equity Under the ADP

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Climate Action Network International (CAN-I) is the world's largest network of civil society organizations working together to promote government action to address the climate crisis, with more than 900 members in over 100 countries. www.climatenetwork.org

CAN welcomes this opportunity to make a short, clarifying submission on the demands of equity, which as we all know are fundamental to the success of the new agreement. Adequacy in general, and the 2°C target in particular, will remain unachievable without equity; this is a hard truth that has major implications for mitigation, and adaptation, and means of implementation. Thus we are encouraged to note that many key equity and ambition related elements are already contained in the co-chairs' "landscape" note. Parties must now move to further discuss and operationalize these elements.

If humanity is to prevent dangerous climate change, an equitable approach to the preparation of the nationally determined contributions will be required, one that mobilizes ambitious contributions from all countries. Such an approach must dynamically assess their responsibility, their capabilities, and their sustainable development needs. To that end, we believe that regular equity reviews of Parties' mitigation, finance, technology and capacity building contributions are required, and that – to avoid the lock-in of inadequate contributions – these reviews must be coupled with a process for repeatedly scaling up ambition. The focus in all this must of course be the upcoming nationally determined contributions, which will properly and inevitably be evaluated in great detail.

We believe that, if these evaluations are to be productive, the following points must be reflected in the pre-Paris negotiations and in the Paris outcome.

EQUITY BEYOND MITIGATION – REACHING INTO MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Equity has long been seen as fundamental to the evaluation of domestic mitigation targets. CAN, however, strongly believes that the nationally determined contributions must be equitable with regard to *both* 1) domestic mitigation action and the 2) financial, technological and capacity building support for mitigation and adaptation measures in developing countries. It is only when domestic mitigation and means of implementation are taken together that they properly define the effort that a Party contributes to the common climate challenge. Moreover, it is only when overall mitigation contributions are understood in this manner that Parties are able to meaningfully evaluate each others' contributions, and to see their way to contributions that are more ambitious than those that only take domestic mitigation into account. This is a fundamental aspect of the predicament that's now before the Parties, and it must be faced.

THE DEMAND OF SCIENCE

In CAN's view, the Convention provides three core equity principles (see [CAN's equity principles paper](#)¹) that any equity approach should build upon:

- A precautionary approach to adequacy,
- Common but differentiated responsibility and respective capability,
- The right to sustainable development.

Preventing dangerous climate change requires all countries to cooperatively undertake adequate global actions. The IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report has made the challenge quite clear: If humanity is to hold the 2°C line, then the global carbon budget that remains is almost vanishingly small. The door to climate stabilization is still open, but only barely, and there's absolutely no time to waste. At current emissions levels, any chance at 2°C will very soon be lost.

The effort that will be required to live within the very limited remaining carbon budget – and to simultaneously build a world that supports sustainable development for all – is one that will only be possible if the post-2015 regime is one in which extremely challenging climate actions are shared equitably among all countries. The bottom line here is that each Party must see the others to be doing their best to do their fair shares. Unless they do, the required level of ambition and international cooperation will remain out of reach. This is why CAN urges Parties to design and justify their contributions in a transparent manner that is amenable to evaluation by others.

AN EQUITY REVIEW WITH AGREED EQUITY INDICATORS

The key to success of course is the negotiations among the Parties. Seeking to inform these negotiations, CAN continues to argue for an agreed list of well-defined, transparently quantifiable indicators that fully reflects the Convention's core equity principles. The problem, of course, is that time is passing quickly, and there is as yet no agreement on such a list of indicators.

Two contradictory views must be recognized:

- Many Parties, observers and experts believe that, after years of debate, the essential equity indicators are well known and well understood. CAN stands on this side, and argues that five high-level indicators, when taken together, can sufficiently express the Convention's core equity principles. It sees these core indicators to be Adequacy, Responsibility, Capability, Sustainable Development Need, and Adaptation Need, and it argues that this list of indicators, taken seriously, would provide a robust basis for a strong equity review based upon the Convention.
- At the same time, we recognize that not all Parties and Observers agree. There are those who argue that even the best indicator-based approaches amount in the end to "formulas" that will never be agreed. And there are even more who argue that all Parties must be able to define equity for themselves if these definitions are ever to adequately respect their national circumstances.

Fortunately, there are ways forward through these disagreements. For one thing, core indicators need not be exclusive. Parties can specify their views of equity in terms of an agreed list of indicators (like those suggested above) without in any way losing any critical flexibility, for after all they can define these indicators as they will, and they can add whatever additional indicators that they see as relevant. What is crucial is comparability, and the recognition that comparability demands both transparency and reproducibility.

¹ http://climatenetwork.org/sites/default/files/can_convention-based_indicators_sept2013.pdf

In the longer term, a deeper consensus would be helpful. Thus CAN calls again for a formal equity review under the UNFCCC. This review should involve expert input that functions as part of an overarching equity and science review. To this end, CAN calls again for a process in which international experts (IPCC, SBSTA, and/or others) assist Parties as they seek to establish a common understanding on fair shares, and as they evaluate submitted contributions in the light of this understanding. This process should begin soon, especially because it cannot be quickly finalized. The ultimate goal must be agreement on a “fair enough” set of post-2020 contributions that delivers the material and political support necessary to any very high level of common ambition.

PREPARING NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS

As Parties prepare their contributions, they should keep the Convention’s core equity principles, and today’s broad if not universal consensus on equity indicators, clearly in mind. Both principles and indicators will play central roles when their contributions are evaluated and compared. In any case, Parties must ensure that their contributions are transparent and reproducible, and should clearly explain why they believe that their contributions represent their fair share of the common global challenge.

The ideal nationally determined contribution is not merely ambitious, it is transparently proportional to the responsibility, and capability, and sustainable development need of the proposing Party. It is a contribution from which other Parties – and experts working both formally and informally – can generalize. It is a contribution from which underlying assumptions about ambition and equity can be easily extracted, and then applied to all Parties to estimate comparable contributions. All countries, after all, have responsibility and capability, and when any country declares its contribution, it is implicitly making a claim about how much action its responsibility and capability implies, and about how much other countries should act, if they are to act in similar proportion.

In fact, when a Party declares a contribution, it is implicitly choosing a temperature target, the one that would be realized if all other Parties were to act in a comparable manner, relative to their fair share. If a Party proposes a contribution that amounts to less than its fair share of the effort required to hold the 2°C line, then that Party is, in effect, proposing an overall temperature increase that exceeds 2°C. This simple truth, which has not been adequately recognized, must become a commonly-understood reality against which all nationally determined contributions are measured. To that end, Parties must do their very best to agree a common list of equity indicators, a list that provides a common framework within which other Parties and civil society can measure the fairness and adequacy of all Parties’ contributions.

CIVIL SOCIETY EQUITY REVIEWS

To conclude: we are convinced that a formal equity review is essential to build trust, and to drive a high-ambition global transition. Nevertheless, we understand that such a review may prove to be beyond the current reach of the Parties, particularly with regard to detailed and comparative reviews of the nationally determined contributions that will be presented in advance of Paris.

CAN therefore believes that informal equity review processes are also essential. Such processes must be built upon the Convention’s core equity principles, and should be designed to move closer towards an effective and meaningful formal equity review – to ensure that it takes place in a serious manner, and as soon as possible.

There are a number of such informal equity review processes being developed, and CAN is supporting them. This is because global civil society, in many ways and with ever increasing coherence, is striving to reach its own collective judgments about equity, and about equity indicators in particular.

In this context, our goal is a level of civil society agreement that is precise enough to support common judgments about fairness and the adequacy of contributions. More precisely, we seek an agreement that we can together use to help identify specific leaders and specific laggards, and by so doing help to ensure that the pre-Paris negotiations and the Paris outcome deliver the level of ambition needed to avert the worst of the climate crisis.